

Advancement News

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Prepared. For Life.™

Previous issues available at: www.scouting.org/scoutsource/GuideToAdvancement/Advancement_News.aspx

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

Don't Miss Out on Philmont Advancement Training

There are two opportunities this summer to attend the BSA's official Mechanics of Advancement training course: June 10–16 and July 29–August 4.

To register, go to www.myscouting.org and choose the "Events Registration" tab. The courses begin with check-in at Philmont on Sunday afternoon and conclude the following Saturday after breakfast. See the last issue of *Advancement News* for more details. Learn how your entire family can be involved in the mystique and grandeur of Philmont.

Future Advancement Educational Support

Where do we find information for those who guide advancement? Currently, as has been described in previous newsletters, courses are offered at Philmont Training Center in the summer and the Sea Base in January. In addition, many general topics are covered in *Advancement News*. To provide further education, materials are now under development to assist with advancement training for areas, council clusters, council universities of Scouting, and so forth. These will first

Next Issues of *Advancement News* to Cover Two Months

The next issue of *Advancement News* will cover both June and July, and the subsequent issue will cover both August and September. We will be back to monthly issues in October.

target the *Guide to Advancement*, the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*, merit badge counselor orientation, and Internet Advancement.

Other sessions are under consideration. The plan is to make these courses flexible to fit both all-day seminars covering many topics and shorter sessions focusing on specific needs. Watch this space for progress reports.

Advancement Team Now on Twitter

The national Advancement Team is now on Twitter! Topics cover the FAQs received at the national office, clarifications on policies and procedures, and best practices in advancement.

If you already have a Twitter account, follow us at "@AdvBSA" or "BSA Advancement Team." If you don't have an account, it's quick and easy to set one up at www.Twitter.com. To limit incoming emails ("tweets"), you can select the Advancement Team as the only account you want to follow.

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On Increasing Advancement

Support for the Outdoor Program

Since Lord Baden-Powell's first campout on Brownsea Island, the outdoors has been an important part of Scouting. Fun things happen on campouts, and they can be a place where advancement occurs. Thus, district and council advancement committees have a responsibility to provide a level of support (see Guide to Advancement topics 3.0.0.1, No. 6, and 3.0.0.2, No. 6). How can we make this happen?

Let's say the district or the council is planning a camporee. Proactive involvement from the advancement committee in assisting with the planning of the event can assure the activities held include advancement opportunities. The committee can also facilitate the implementation of the four steps in Boy Scout advancement.

For example, planning could include advance notice to unit leadership on how to prepare their Scouts for the event (a Scout learns). At the camporee, careful planning will have the Scouts demonstrating what they have learned (a Scout is tested). If we're really proactive, we might plan a special ceremony to recognize advancement at the camporee (a Scout is recognized). What else might we do?

- Encourage troops to hold boards of review and courts of honor at summer camp. A court of honor in the woods at night with a campfire burning brightly in the background will be a memory Scouts will tell their children and grandchildren.
- Visit roundtables to communicate and encourage advancement opportunities in outdoor programs.
- Ask the camping committee and the camp staff to collect reports of rank advancement at camp and forward them to the advancement committee.
- Be proactive in working with the camping committee to make sure appropriate advancement opportunities are available at Cub Scout day camp, resident camp, and other outdoor activities such as Cub Scout parent weekends and Webelos Scout camp.
- Make sure packs understand the advancement opportunities available for Cub Scouts at camp. Again, roundtables are a good place to foster this understanding.
- Be proactive in making sure merit badge experts are available to enhance the program at summer camp. Having local experts visit camp during the week will enrich the experience.

- Get involved in the planning and promotion of Venturing outdoor program events. Make sure crew officers and Advisors understand how these events and advancement can connect.
- The ideas concerning involvement with camporees also apply to the winter Klondike derbies and other similar events. Be actively involved in the planning and promotion of these activities so that advancement will be a natural part of them and units will be fully aware of the resources available.

All of these activities will make the outdoor programs more meaningful for the youth, and they will remain in Scouting longer. This gives us more opportunities to influence their character, citizenship, and fitness—isn't that what we're all about?

The Cub Scout Angle

The Pace of Advancement

A Cub Scout should earn the rank for his grade (or age); he does not go back and work on previous ranks that he missed. Generally speaking, a Cub Scout should advance one rank per year (in addition to Bobcat, which all youth must earn before working on the appropriate rank for the year). In many packs, the year's rank is presented at the annual blue and gold banquet, although other times are appropriate.

Some youth may earn the year's rank earlier and could be recognized accordingly (e.g., Webelos rank); others may earn it later. Either is just fine. On June 1, all youth move up to the next level. Thus, during summer camp, day camp, or other pack summertime opportunities, Cub Scouts should start working on the achievements and electives required for the next rank—the one they will work on with their den over the coming school year.

There are times when a boy may not finish a year's rank by May 31; for example, he may have joined the den midyear or later. In that event, the den leader, Cubmaster, committee chair, and parents or guardians should discuss options, which could include allowing the boy an extra month or so to complete the rank. This is acceptable and will give him a sense of accomplishment.

A Cub Scout's advancement progress depends on several parameters, including his own motivation, the encouragement and help he gets from family and leaders, and his need for recognition. These factors will vary for each boy. Generally, between the parent or guardian, the den leader, and others, they will know if the effort put forth is really the Cub Scout's best. In any event, and absent special needs, the Cub Scout should start working on the next year's rank along with his den no later than the beginning of the next school year.

About *Advancement News*

Follow the national Advancement Team on Twitter!
BSA Advancement Team, @AdvBSA

Advancement News is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America national Advancement Team and the national Advancement Committee. Its intent is to support and clarify procedures found in the *Guide to Advancement*, announce various changes and updates in advancement, and to assist advancement committees in making decisions that can help increase the rate of advancement. The plan is to distribute *Advancement News* monthly, but we're flexible. It will go out when there is something important to say. Feedback, suggestions, and letters to the editor are welcome at advancement.team@scouting.org. Districts and councils may reprint articles from this publication.

Managing Subscriptions to *Advancement News*

Advancement News is designed for council and district advancement chairs, advancement staff advisors, and Eagle processors. However, any Scouting volunteer or professional may subscribe.

Subscribing. Send a message to advancement.team@scouting.org, with "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line. Indicate your name, email address, and council in the message text.

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Advancement Committee Mechanics

Advancement Committee Position Descriptions

The October 2011 issue of *Advancement News* identified 12 specialized council advancement committee positions. These are district advancement chairs coordinator, volunteerism specialist, advancement promotions specialist, advancement training and events coordinator, camping committee and outdoors program liaison, records keeper and statistician, Internet Advancement specialist, merit badge chair, Eagle Scout issues coordinator, special needs chair, awards and recognition chair, and religious emblems coordinator.

These positions support the specific advancement committee duties suggested in section 3 of the *Guide to Advancement*, as well as the advancement goals identified on the Journey to Excellence scorecards.

Most importantly, these positions help build a diverse committee to support advancement across all Scouting programs, a key to retention of youth members.

Advancement News will address the responsibilities and benefits of these roles, beginning with the district advancement chairs coordinator and volunteerism specialist in this issue.

District Advancement Chairs Coordinator. This member of the council advancement committee supports the district advancement chairs and inspires a positive relationship between council and district advancement committees. Most importantly, a dedicated volunteer with these duties affords the council advancement chair more time to build committee membership and organize efforts across all Scouting programs.

Specific tasks may include regular contact with the district advancement chairs, ensuring each district advancement committee has adequate membership and is able to provide updated advancement information and specific support as the district requests it. This member may also coordinate with the district chairs to meet council Journey to Excellence goals and encourage 100 percent Internet Advancement reporting. Each district advancement committee may benefit from a similar role to coordinate with the unit advancement chairs.

Volunteerism Specialist. The volunteerism specialist addresses a goal identified in topic 3.0.0.1 of the *Guide to Advancement* for both the council and district advancement committees: members "should represent a breadth of experience in all Scouting programs."

Many districts easily recruit volunteers to support Eagle Scout needs. The volunteerism specialist helps them reach beyond Eagle issues to support Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, Sea Scout, and Venturer advancement with committee members from all programs. This helps the advancement committees at the council and district level provide ongoing training to maintain awareness of updated procedures, best practices, and related details.

For example, the council advancement committee monitors the quality and quantity of Cub Scout advancement. Achieving these goals requires plans for promoting Cub Scout advancement as well as training adult leaders in the skills to deliver successful Cub Scout and Webelos advancement programs. Likewise, to help achieve high advancement rates in Venturing, specialized leaders can assist with promoting the Bronze Awards and providing training that maximizes Venturing's flexible program.

Eagle Scout Rank Credentials Now Produced at National Distribution Center

Effective April 1, the production and mailing of the Eagle Scout rank credentials has been moved to the National Distribution Center in Charlotte, NC.

Questions regarding Eagle Scout rank credentials, including requests for corrections and reprinted or duplicate credentials, should now be directed to NDC customer service at 800-323-0732 extension 458 or 488, or to eagle.certificates@scouting.org.

Eagle Issues

The Evolution of Eagle Scout Service Project Approval

Throughout Scouting's history, one of the key aspects of the program has been service to others. Prior to 1965, however, there was no requirement for an Eagle Scout service project, but BSA did include such language as "Do your best to help in your home, school, church or synagogue, and community." With the seventh edition of the *Boy Scout Handbook*, specific service project requirements for the Star, Life, and Eagle Scout ranks were added.

By the eighth edition, the concept of giving "...leadership to others in a service project..." had become a part of the requirements, but at that time only the Scoutmaster and the troop committee had to approve the project. In later years, council or district approval was instituted along with use of the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*.

Over time, in some areas the Eagle Scout project became much more than was ever intended.

In many ways, expectations were increased and a Scout was required to put in significant—and often unreasonable—effort just to obtain approval to begin his project. Councils, districts, and units developed different "Life to Eagle" packets to explain their various interpretations and expectations, and many of these were unnecessarily lengthy and daunting. It is clear in most cases that local intent was to strengthen the Eagle rank and help ensure successful experiences.

Feedback to the national office, however, suggests this also had the effect of "scaring off" many good Scouts who could have cleared the Eagle Scout service project hurdle had it not been raised beyond its intended level. It also generated many complaints from parents and Scouts that perfectly good project plans were rejected for lack of details that would have only been necessary if someone other than the Scout would be implementing his plan—but that scenario is not permitted.

The Eagle Scout candidate is the one who must lead his project. And he may not be required to do more planning than is required for him to see it through to completion.

With the latest versions of the *Guide to Advancement* and the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*, a significant change was made to the project approval process. The Scout is now required to obtain approval only for his project proposal rather than a project plan. The proposal is more than a concept description, however. It is the *beginnings* of planning and must provide sufficient information for those reviewing it to determine if the project is feasible and the Scout has a reasonable chance for a positive experience. (See the beginning of topic 9.0.2.7 in the *Guide to Advancement* for the five tests that must be met.) It is acceptable, therefore, to ask for a few details, but at the same time, we must respect the time required for the Scout to prepare the proposal.

There were no other changes in the service project requirement. It is still important for the Scout to have his proposal approved before he begins work on his project. Approval must first be obtained from his unit leader, committee chair, and the project beneficiary (in any order). Then he must go to the council or district. Every attempt should be made to complete these approvals in one meeting between the various project reviewers and the Scout. During these meetings, it is appropriate to critique the candidate's work, offer suggestions, encourage him to work on his planning action steps, and meet with his project coach for further guidance as needed.

Once the proposal has been approved, the Scout may begin to work on his project. Usually the first step will be to complete his planning. The Final Plan form is intended for this purpose, and Scouts are strongly encouraged to use it. It is possible, though that a Scout could describe his planning process using other evidence, and in some cases a board of review might accept a verbal description. This all depends on the complexity of the project. In most cases, evidence of planning should be in writing, but this is not stated in the requirement.

Occasionally, a Scout may be delayed in starting his project for one reason or another, or some changes may be necessary. Except under extreme circumstances, approval may not be withdrawn. If there is a delay of several months, or if changes are to be significant, the Scout would be well advised to confirm the project beneficiary is still interested.

The key to success with the Eagle Scout service project is a project coach who can develop a good rapport

with the candidate. The coach will advise him on what should go into his plan and how to complete the project to the satisfaction of a board of review, which ultimately decides if the requirement was met. Initial feedback suggests the best coaches are those who have had experience approving project plans under the previous wording of the requirement.

Consult topic 9.0.2.7 of the *Guide to Advancement* and also the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*, No. 512-927, for more information on this subject.

Minimizing Eagle Scout Service Project Fundraising

As part of planning, developing, and leading his project to a successful conclusion, the Eagle Scout candidate must develop the project proposal and the resources (financial, material, and labor) to accomplish it. There are many worthy service projects that can be carried out at minimal, if any, expense. These are preferred to those with high price tags. To be clear, the BSA *prefers* there not be any fundraising at all; however, it is understood that this is not realistic. In those cases, all fundraising or requests for material donations should be done in a restrained manner similar to simple unit fundraising efforts.

The BSA prefers little or no fundraising primarily because of legal issues relating to accounting and receipting for funds, custodial responsibilities, potential tax deduction issues, and so forth. When fundraising is kept to a minimum, similar to typical unit money-earning projects, there is less chance for problems to develop. Large-scale fundraising efforts can add complexities in which minors should not be involved. This can be further complicated because funds are raised in the name of the beneficiary and not the BSA.

Once it has been determined that external fundraising may be necessary, it is up to the Scout to identify specific options to use. Traditional approaches such as car washes, selling various products, or hosting an event such as a spaghetti dinner or a yard sale may be considered. "Fundraising" also includes the solicitation of donations for cash or materials. Whatever is done, if it reaches beyond the Scout and his family, his unit, or the beneficiary, as described in the *Guide to Advancement*, an Eagle Scout Service Project Fundraising Application is required.

The *Guide to Advancement*, topic 9.0.2.10, states: "Fundraising is permitted only for securing materials and otherwise facilitating a project." This statement is intended to preclude projects that are primarily fundraisers, but it does not specify how funds are to be used to accomplish the project itself. In fact, any funds

collected can be used as allowed by the beneficiary for all necessary and reasonable expenses including such things as materials, equipment rental, professional services, and even food and water for volunteers as they assist with the project. An important factor here, though not required, is for the Scout to have a budget proposal that identifies all areas of expense that he has reviewed with the project beneficiary prior to beginning fundraising efforts.

Because fundraising efforts for an Eagle Scout service project are to be facilitative, and minimized insofar as practical, it is inappropriate to apply the language of the service project requirements to them. The requirements for planning, developing, and giving leadership must be met through the project itself, not through the fundraising element. For this reason, approaches such as online fundraising are acceptable. The BSA does not endorse online fundraising over any other method, nor does it endorse any of the particular online fundraising websites over another. There are several, however, that could be considered, including www.gofundme.com, www.firstgiving.com, and www.creativegiving.com. These vendors allow Scouts to tell their story to their friends and associates as well as to others in the community who may be interested in supporting their efforts. Be aware that these websites do not provide their services for free.

Health and Safety Announces New Guidelines

Follow the link below to download the new *Age Guidelines for Tool Use and Work at Elevations or Excavations*, No. 680-028, and *Service Project Planning Guidelines*, No. 680-027, recently released by the national BSA Health and Safety Team.

http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/Guidelines_Policies.aspx

These guidelines apply generally to BSA activities in all programs as well as to Eagle Scout service projects. The national Advancement Team is currently organizing volunteer task forces to produce revisions to the *Guide to Advancement* and the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*. As a part of the process, these new safety oriented guidelines will be referenced in the *Guide to Advancement* and be folded into the service project workbook. While some of this material is already mentioned or alluded to in the final plan form in the workbook, this is where most of the remaining required adjustments will appear.

Those administering to the Eagle Scout service project must keep in mind that the purpose of the Eagle Scout service project proposal is to meet the five tests for an

acceptable project outlined in topic 9.0.2.7. These include, for example, that the project appears to be feasible and that the Scout has a reasonable chance for success. It is likely that the safety elements included in the proposal will be strengthened somewhat in the revision, but until they are, the proposal as it is currently set forth is what must be used.

Currently the test related to safety says, "Safety issues will be addressed." This means that project reviewers must be convinced the Scout will pay sufficient attention to safety as he completes his planning (after his proposal is approved) and as he carries out his project. Project reviewers can help with this process by providing candidates with the new guidelines and initiating discussion on the importance of considering them in the further planning and then the execution of the project.

Questions concerning either of the new documents should be directed to the Health and Safety Team at the national office: health.safety@scouting.org.

The revised workbook and *Guide to Advancement* are planned for release in February 2013.

Merit Badges—What's New?

Rifle Shooting Merit Badge Update

With summer camp just around the corner, we are reminded that few activities are as popular as the shooting sports offered at our camps. As with all of the merit badges—but especially those dealing with firearms—we ask merit badge counselors to take special note of the BSA standards. Merit badge counselors must take responsibility to assure that all instruction involving any handling of firearms or live ammunition is supervised by a certified BSA National Camping School shooting sports director or National Rifle Association rifle shooting instructor or coach.

Instruction involving muzzleloaders must be supervised by an NCS shooting sports director or NRA/National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association–certified muzzleloading firearms instructor. Shooting must be supervised by an NRA-certified Range Safety Officer.

If instruction and shooting are to occur at the same time, both the RSO and qualified instructor must be present. The supervisor and instructor may not be the same person. The complete description of the BSA standards for rifle shooting will be found as a "Note to the Counselor" in the upcoming revision of the *Rifle*



Shooting merit badge pamphlet. Adherence to these standards will result in the safest and best shooting experience for our Scouts.

Note that if a merit badge counselor does not have the certification requirements as discussed here, he or she may enlist assistance from someone who does have them in order to provide the instruction or shooting supervision. A council advancement committee may, however, require the counselor to hold the certifications as evidence of the nationally required "skills and education" in the subjects they cover. See the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 7.0.1.1.

Special Necessities

New Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Merit Badges Now Available

The national Advancement Committee has begun an effort to review all advancement related forms and literature. As a result, we welcome the debut of the revised Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Merit Badges, No. 512-730.

The new application explains in simple terms the procedures involved in obtaining approval for a Scout to use alternate merit badges for the Eagle Scout rank and gives a number of possible substitutions that can be considered. While the form has undergone a significant change, the overall goal of making Scouting and the advancement program available to all who wish to participate has not.

You can find the new form under "Merit Badges" at: www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/resources.aspx.

Note that the form is now available as a fillable PDF.

Helpful Hints on Special Needs Advancement Flexibility

Section 10 of the *Guide to Advancement* contains an abundance of important information and can be very helpful for any leader of Scouts with special needs. In this issue of *Advancement News* we will focus on advancement flexibility.

For Scouts with special needs to get the most out of the program, a partnership must exist between the unit leaders, the parents, qualified medical professionals, and, as appropriate, the Scout's educational providers. Working together, all parties can gain an understanding not only of the disability and abilities involved, but also of the processes covered in the *Guide to Advancement*, which begin with topic 10.2.0.0.

First, everyone must realize that the ability to satisfy requirements is vastly different in Cub Scouting than in Boy Scouting. For Cub Scouts, the standard measurement is "Has he done his best?" For those working on Boy Scout advancement, the young man is "expected to meet the requirements—no more and no less—and he is to do exactly what is stated."

That quote from the *Guide to Advancement* should not make one think that advancement in Boy Scouting is not possible for those with special needs, but it does mean leaders need to do some planning to develop an understanding of how alternative requirements can be approved and used.

We want to ensure that every person who joins Scouting can participate in the advancement. Section 10 is a great resource to help you find the answers that will make the program for special needs youth an enjoyable process for all involved.

What Do You Think?

Survey for May 2012

Advancement Education

This month's survey seeks your input regarding the specific needs for advancement education, as the national Advancement Committee considers assembling educational programs for distribution and presentation at the local level. The estimated time to complete this survey is approximately seven minutes.

Note that anonymous responses are not accepted for this survey. This is because of the importance the national Advancement Team places on the ability to communicate with survey respondents should more information be needed about their answers. Please click on the link below. We want to know what you think!

<https://bsa2.allegiantech.com/cgi-bin/qwebcorporate.dll?idx=U7QSEQ>

A Peek Ahead

Watch this regular feature for a glimpse of what is slated for our next issue. Please understand, however, that the actual articles may vary somewhat based on a number of internal considerations.

Topics Planned for June/July

Note that the next issue of Advancement News will be distributed in mid- to late June for the months of both June and July.

Report on the National Advancement Committee Meeting

On Increasing Advancement:
Reporting advancement

The Cub Scout Angle: What's the point of arrow points?

Advancement Committee Mechanics: Second article in a series detailing the responsibilities of suggested advancement committee members

From the *Guide to Advancement*: Service projects for ranks other than Eagle Scout

Merit Badges—What's New: Search and Rescue; recent changes to assorted merit badges

What's the Procedure? Merit badges at camp

Awards and Recognition: Lifesaving and meritorious action awards

What Do You Think? Feedback on *Advancement News*